

WHAT IS CLAIMED IS:

1. A method for associating a reference with a portion of a first view of data, comprising:
 - providing an interface allowing a user to select the referenced portion and to create the reference, wherein the referenced portion comprises at least two sub-objects visible in the first view of data;
 - creating a link to each sub-object in the referenced portion; and
 - creating a record containing the reference and the link to each sub-object in the referenced portion.
2. The method of claim 1, wherein the reference comprises an annotation describing the referenced portion.
3. The method of claim 1, wherein:
 - the view of data comprises a table of query results; and
 - the at least two sub-objects comprise cells in the table of query results; and
 - the referenced portion comprises at least one row of cells visible in the table of query results.
4. The method of claim 3, wherein the referenced portion comprises the entire table of query results.
5. The method of claim 3, wherein the link to each sub portion indicates a table, row, and column defining a corresponding cell.
6. The method of claim 5, where the link to each sub-object comprises an index having one or more parameters generated based on a table, row, and column defining the corresponding cell.

7. The method of claim 1, further comprising creating an entry in a link table for each sub-object in the referenced portion, wherein the entry for each sub-object contains an indication of the reference.

8. The method of claim 7, wherein the entry for each sub-object contains an identifier uniquely identifying the record containing the reference.

9. A method for providing an indication of a reference to a portion of a first view of data, comprising:

providing an interface allowing display of a second view of data;

analyzing the second view of data to identify sub-objects visible in both the second view of data and the referenced portion of the first view of data; and

providing an indication of the reference in the interface, only if a predetermined set of sub-objects visible in the second view of data are visible in the referenced portion of the first view of data.

10. The method of claim 9, wherein analyzing the second view of data to identify sub-objects visible in both the second view of data and the referenced portion of the first view of data comprises:

obtaining a set of sub-object links stored with the reference; and

identifying sub-objects identified by the sub-object links that are visible in the second view of data.

11. The method of claim 10, wherein analyzing the second view of data to identify sub-objects visible in both the second view of data and the referenced portion of the first view of data further comprises:

obtaining, based on sub-objects visible in the second view of data, an indication of the reference from a table; and

wherein obtaining a set of sub-object links stored with the reference comprises retrieving a record containing the reference and the sub-object links using the indication of the reference obtained from the table.

12. The method of claim 9, comprising providing an indication of the reference in the interface only if each sub-object visible in the referenced portion of the first view of data is visible in the second view of data.

13. The method of claim 9, wherein providing an indication of the reference in the interface comprises displaying an icon proximate one or more sub-objects visible in the second view of data that are also visible in the referenced portion of the first view of data.

14. The method of claim 13, wherein more than one reference is associated with one or more portions of data in the second view and separate icons for each reference are displayed.

15. The method of claim 13, wherein:
the reference comprises an annotation; and
the method further comprises displaying the annotation in response to a user selecting the icon.

16. The method of claim 13, further comprising providing an indication of one or more sub-objects visible in the second view of data that are also visible in the referenced portion of the first view of data.

17. A method of creating and displaying an annotation associated with an annotated portion of a first view of data, comprising:
providing an interface allowing selection of the annotated portion of the first view of data and creation of the annotation, wherein the annotated portion comprises at least two cells visible in the first view of data;
creating a record containing the annotation and a link to each cell in the annotated portion;
presenting a second view of data;
analyzing the second view of data to identify cells visible in both the second view of data and the annotated portion of the first view of data; and

providing an indication of the annotation, only if a predetermined set of cells visible in the second view of data are visible in the referenced portion of the first view of data.

18. The method of claim 17, wherein the predetermined set of cells comprises at least one of:

all the cells visible in the annotated portion of the first view of data;

a predetermined number of cells visible in the annotated portion of the first view of data;

a specified set of cells visible in the annotated portion of the first view of data;

and

a predetermined percentage of cells visible in the annotated portion of the first view of data.

19. The method of claim 18, wherein the predetermined set of cells is specified by a user via the interface allowing selection of the annotated portion of the first view of data and creation of the annotation.

20. The method of claim 18, further comprising providing a mechanism for identifying the predetermined set of cells, wherein the mechanism is accessible by a human user or a software application.

21. The method of claim 17, wherein the method further comprises creating an entry in a link table for each cell in the annotated portion, wherein the entry for each cell contains an indication of the annotations.

22. The method of claim 21, wherein the entry for each cell contains an identifier uniquely identifying the record containing the annotation.

23. The method of claim 21, wherein analyzing the second view of data to identify cells visible in both the second view of data and the annotated portion of the first view of data comprises:

querying the link table to identify one or more annotations describing views of data containing cells in the second view of data;

retrieving annotation records for the one or more identified annotations; and

identifying cells visible in both the second view of data and views described by the identified annotations, based on cell links stored in the retrieved annotation records.

24. A computer-readable medium containing a program for associating an annotation with an annotated portion of a first view of data which, when executed by a processor, performs operations comprising:

providing an interface allowing a user to select the annotated portion and to create the annotation, wherein the annotated portion comprises at least two cells visible in the first view of data;

creating a link to each cell in the annotated portion; and

creating a record containing the reference and the link to each cell in the annotated portion.

25. The computer-readable medium of claim 24, further comprising:

displaying of a second view of data;

analyzing the second view of data to identify cells visible in both the second view of data and the annotated portion of the first view of data; and

providing an indication of the annotation, only if a predetermined set of cells visible in the second view of data are visible in the annotated portion of the first view of data.

26. The computer-readable medium of claim 24, further comprising providing an interface allowing the user to specify the predetermined set of cells.

27. A system for creating and displaying annotations associated with views of data, comprising:

an application for displaying views of data;

an annotation database for storing annotation records; and

an annotation system configured to allow a user to create and annotation for a selected annotated portion of a first view of data displayed by the application, wherein the annotated portion comprises at least two cells visible in the first view of data, create cell links to each cell visible in the annotated portion, and create an annotation record containing the annotation and the cell links.

28. The system of claim 27, wherein the annotation system is further configured to:

analyze a second view of data displayed by the application to identify cells visible in both the second view of data and the annotated portion of the first view of data; and

provide an indication of the annotation, only if a predetermined set of cells visible in the second view of data are visible in the annotated portion of the first view of data.

29. The system of claim 28, wherein the annotation system is further configured to allow a user to specify the predetermined set of cells.

30. The system of claim 28, wherein:

the system further comprises a link table; and

the annotation system is further configured to create an entry in a link table for each cell in the annotated portion of the first view of data, wherein the entry for each cell contains an identification of the annotation.

31. The system of claim 30, wherein the annotation system is configured to analyze the second view of data displayed by the application to identify cells visible in both the second view of data and the annotated portion of the first view of data by:

querying the link table to identify the annotation;

retrieving the annotation record containing the annotation and the query links;

and

identify, based on cell links contained in the annotation record, cells visible in the second view of data also visible in annotated portion of the first view of data.